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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (08/05): Palestinians Hope Fatah
Congress Restores Party's Luster

Main Stories:

All dailies run prominent coverage of the Sixth Fatah Party Congress that opened in Bethlehem on August 4. The lead stories focused on Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas's speech delivered at the opening session. In their headlines, all dailies quote Abbas reiterating that "we seek peace; however, resistance will remain one of our choices." Abbas noted that Fatah is determined to have a successful national dialogue with Hamas and blamed the latter for the continued failure of these efforts. Abbas is quoted in Al-Ayyam stating that Palestinian national elections will be the last resort for ending the internal division and confirmed that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state is only a matter of time. Hamas spokesperson Mushir Al-Masri is quoted in Al-Quds saying that Abbas's remarks were "provocative and don't show any serious will toward achieving national reconciliation."

The Israeli Minister of Information Yuli Edelstein is quoted in Al-Ayyam saying the Fatah conference is "A declaration of war against Israel" and noting that "Fatah members agree with continuing the armed resistance." Conversely, an unnamed Israeli official is quoted saying that the conference may be "an opportunity to pursue negotiations with the Palestinians."

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida runs front page coverage on Fatah Leader and Congress spokesman Nabil Amr noting in a press conference on August 4 that Fatah will resort to elections as an alternative to "bloody disagreements."

Al-Quds reports on its front page that the US is preparing to

announce a plan for ending the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The report notes that President Obama and his advisors initiated this "peace plan" based on consultations with Arab states, Israel and the Palestinian Authority during the past several months. US sources noted that the plan will be announced after President Obama's meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Washington, DC on August 18.

Al-Hayat Al-Jadida front pages news citing Wafa News Agency that the European Union transferred 12.75 million Euro to the PA on August 4 to pay civil service salaries. -----

BLOCK QUOTES:

1) Ashraf Ajrami opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the title, "Will Fatah ever return" (08/05): "International and regional powers are waiting for Fatah to restore its status, as they believe it is almost impossible to have a peace process or negotiations without Fatah...the response is in Fatah's hands. Will it be able to meet this challenge and restore its status as the influential movement in the Palestinian political scene?"

2) Hani Habib opines in Al-Ayyam independent daily under the headline "Fatah's resurrection, from Bethlehem" (08/05): "By holding the Fatah conference in the determined place and at the scheduled time proves Fatah's victory...Fatah was able to overcome all obstacles and hold the conference. By doing so, it gave all of its members and affiliates hope to achieve unity...we will wait to see the outcome of this conference and, who knows, we may witness the

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rebirth of Fatah from Bethlehem!"

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